



VILLAGE VOICE

QUEEN STREET AND WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION NEWS BULLETIN

AUGUST, 1985

New moves on Waimea House restoration

By Association President
Robin Brampton

ARE we at last to see some action to restore Waimea House, the Georgian style residence which has stood half derelict since the Royal Blind Society's unsuccessful attempt to demolish it in 1973?

In the past few weeks, the State Government has been taking a top level interest in the problem, and at least two private individuals have expressed interest in buying the property for restoration.

But matters really came to a head on July 23 when the Mayor of Woollahra, Alderman Jock MacCallum, intended to ask the council to pass a resolution calling on the State Government to resume the property.

That afternoon, every alderman received a letter from a firm of architects acting for the owner, Dr Kelly, advising that they had been instructed to prepare new plans for the restoration of Waimea House as a private home.

Minute withdrawn

In view of this, the Mayor withdrew his mayoral minute from the Council agenda, but he has advised us that he intends to discuss the question informally with the firm of architects concerned.

The history of Waimea House is a very sad one, and few of the large group of concerned residents whose concerted action prevented the demolition in 1973 would have believed that the property would still be unrestored 12 years later.

Standing just off Queen Street,



FLASHBACK. This picture of Waimea House was taken just after the demolition attempt in 1973. Twelve years later, the magnificent Georgian home has still not been restored.

Waimea House was built in 1858 by Thomas Bowden.

Today it is historically and architecturally valuable as one of Sydney's best examples of Georgian style home architecture.

It has been classified by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) and is included in the Australian Heritage Commission's register of the National Estate.

Following an inquiry at the end of 1982, at which the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association gave evidence, a permanent conservation order was gazetted in May, 1983.

This means, among other things, that its owners enjoy some relief from rates and taxes attached to the land.

Dr Kelly has owned the property for about eight years, and has been allowed to build a group of town houses on part of the site.

In 1981 he asked me for a meeting

at which he produced plans drawn up by an architectural practice which has specialised in restorations.

These provided for the restoration of the building and its extension into same Georgian style to form a large family home, including pool, cabana and three-car garage.

He told me then that he had already spent \$50,000 on preserving the building and intended to spend another \$350,000 to complete the scheme.

In view of the fact that nothing has been done in four years to implement this original scheme, our association will be cautious in its attitude to Dr Kelly's latest proposals, which are apparently not yet even on the drawing board.

In fact we have written to the Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr Bob Carr, suggesting that

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West Woollahra plan – at last

WHEN big victories are won, they are sometimes won very quietly.

So there were no champagne corks popping earlier this year when Woollahra Local Environment Plan No. 24 was published in the New South Wales Government Gazette No. 88.

Nevertheless, the contents of this rather dry document represent the successful end of a long battle by local residents to preserve the architectural heritage of their area and keep it as a pleasant place to live.

It was principally to foster a proper planning scheme for the area that the association was formed in 1972.

We subsequently had an enormous input into Woollahra Council's work, even conducting a survey among residents and producing our own draft scheme.

Our principal aim was to preserve the scale and character of the architecture of the area, and prevent the erection of unsightly high rise development.

We had to endure the frustration of seeing the Council's first attempt at a plan abandoned and a new plan introduced which attempted to include "pockets" of high rise along Oxford Street.

This we most strongly resisted, along with other concerned residents, and in 1980 the Council bowed to the pressure and deleted them.

It has taken since then, and a little bit of tinkering with the details, to finally achieve gazettal of a plan which broadly meets with our approval.

Its most important elements are a limit of 9.5 m on the height of new building – for practical purposes three floors – and a conservation zoning over the area.

The final result gives cause for great satisfaction – if not complacency.

Robin Brampton



Bonassi's shop, alias Julio's Corner, has served its last pot of soup.

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the State Government should take measures to ensure that Dr Kelly's renewed promise of restoration is carried out.

"We would suggest that the State Government should make it clear to Dr Kelly that unless the property is restored within a certain reasonable time span, say 18 months to two years, the State will make a resumption order," our letter states.

"If the building were to be resumed and placed on the market, we believe that a purchaser would appear who would be prepared to restore the building in a sympathetic manner.

"Alternatively, some plan could be evolved to restore the building and use it for public purposes, such as a branch library and/or community and arts centre for the area."

Our association has assured the Minister that whatever its future, we will support any initiative which ensures the proper restoration of Waimea House.

Farewell to our last corner shop

ON Sunday, June 30, we came to the end of an era in West Woollahra.

On that day the last corner store in our area, Bonassi's shop at the corner of Wallis Street and Bowden Lane, closed its doors to trading for the last time.

Mr and Mrs Bonassi put on a street party for residents, customers and family after 30 years of trading and what could only be described as "social service".

No number of South West Points, P Marts or whatever could duplicate the intimate and personal service they rendered to a small community.

What P Mart, after all, serves hot soup into your own pot?

For many years the number of service shops in Queen Street has been shrinking – and what is to keep it from shrinking further?

The next time you get in your car to go to South West Point (or wherever) to do your shopping, think again.

Someday, if we keep on voting with our wheels, soon, sometime soon, there might be nowhere to go on our feet to shop.

Our service shops in Queen Street will only be kept alive and viable by our continuing patronage. After all, if we don't use them, who will?

Tom Wilhelm

Editor's note

WHEN your committee started complaining to the Editor/President that *Village Voice* should be bigger and more frequent, he challenged them to do something about it.

As a result, this issue contains writings from five members of the committee, as well as other local residents, and more advertisements from local businessespeople.

Thank you folks. This makes for a more readable and informative newsletter. Let's continue like this.



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Ocean Street may get a fairer trial

FOLLOWING strong representations by the association and Woollahra Municipal Council, the Department of Transport has agreed not to abandon the traffic trial at the Oxford Street end of Ocean Street.

This restricts traffic turning right into Ocean Street to one lane.

More significantly, the Transport Department has asked the Department of Main Roads to arrange, if possible, during the trial for the SCATS traffic control system to be modified to reduce green time at the traffic lights for one-lane movement into Ocean Street.

The DMR has also been asked to report on the comparison of travel time from Bondi to the city via Oxford Street and Ocean Street during the trial.

The Transport Department has promised to send a report to Woollahra Council as soon as possible.

The new move, announced at the end of June, follows meetings and representations reported in the previous *Village Voice* when we asked local residents to support us with letters to the Minister for Roads and the Mayor of Woollahra.

We would like to thank all who did so.

Some victory

The new move represents some victory in turning back the tide of the intolerable traffic levels in Ocean Street for two reasons:

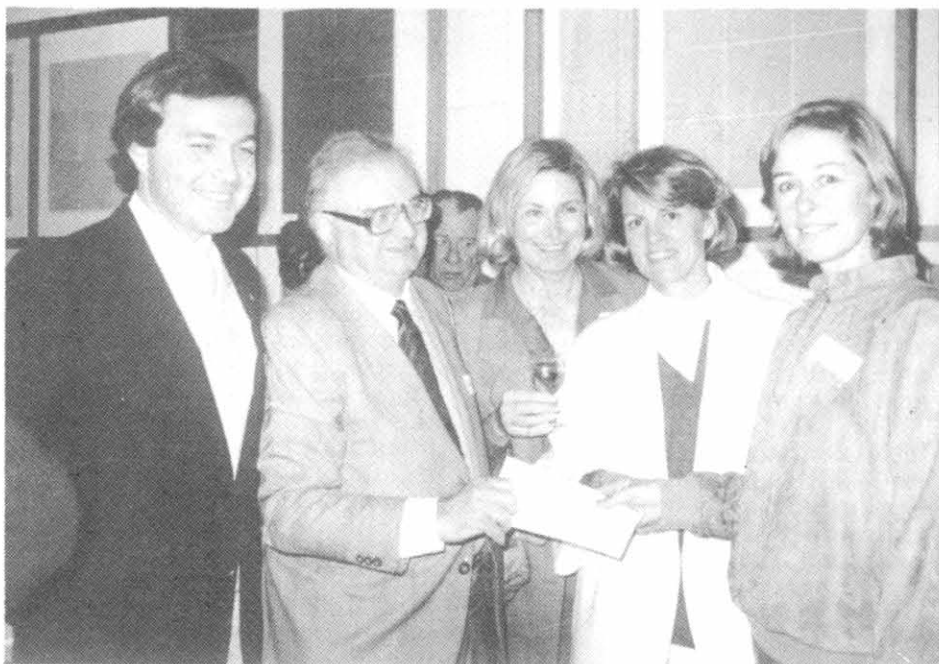
-The Traffic Authority had commended in November that the trial be abandoned altogether and the status quo restored. This retrograde recommendation has been completely rejected.

-Both the association and the Council have always contended that the trial, as instituted last year, was ineffective because there was no change in the green time at the traffic lights.

In fact, the ineffectiveness of the trial was admitted by the Traffic Authority in briefing notes for the meeting last November when it recommended abandoning it.

Now with the proposed change in green times as part of the continuing trial, it will be conducted on a fairer basis.

The trial was instituted just before last year's State election at the direction of the then Minister for Roads,



I always wanted a sugar daddy!

That's what Rosalind Pouw (far right), vice chairman of Holdsworth Street Community Centre, exclaimed when association president Robin Brampton handed her a cheque for \$1000 at our Wine and Cheese Party in July.

The money, from the surplus on the 1984 Queen Street Fair, will be used to provide weekend holidays for young people taking part in the centre's programme for mentally handicapped youngsters.

The scheme will also give parents a break from the difficult task of caring for them.

Also in the picture are Michael Yabsley, State member for Bligh; Pixie Nolan, administrator of Queen Street Fair; and Margaret Lewis, vice president of the association.

Some 60 people attended the party in the lovely setting of Fred Pazotti's showroom in Moncur Street, including several new members who enrolled on the night.

Among our guests, in addition to Mr Yabsley, we were pleased to welcome

Peter Coleman, Federal member for Wentworth; Susan Collett, one of our representatives on Woollahra Council; and our former president Leo Schofield.

In the previous week, the first issue of the SMH's excellent new *Eastern Herald* ran an article which claimed that our area had a preponderance of "movers and shakers".

So Robin Brampton outlined what "moving and shaking" the association had been doing lately. From the subsequent discussion, it is obvious that the Ocean Street traffic problem is still the most burning local issue.

The association would like to thank "Fred Pazotti", alias our committee member David Ross, for allowing us to use his premises for the event.

Pat Hills, who said in a press release that Ocean Street "should not be required to carry other than local traffic".

Our local State member, Michael Yabsley, believes that a greater volume of traffic should be channelled down Oxford Street.

Comparison sought

He has written to the Minister for Transport, Barry Unsworth, suggesting that the comparison of travel times should also include the Oxford Street, Darlinghurst Road, William Street route.

This would ensure that the report was thorough and covered all feasible options.

The association is naturally pleased that the Transport Depart-

ment has overruled the Traffic Authority to continue the trial, and is at last trying to make it effective.

However, we are not letting up in our campaign to get a better deal for Ocean Street residents.

As a new initiative this year, we are sponsoring an independent study of pollution levels caused by Ocean Street traffic.

Pollution levels in Ocean Street will be compared with readings in a quiet street several hundred metres away.

This work is being coordinated by John Morton, a doctor member of our committee who lives in Ocean Street.

(For some resident views on the Ocean Street traffic problem, see our letters section.)

Trees give false sense of security

The following two letters were originally sent to Mr Rick Chaseling, Area Engineer of the Department of Main Roads, on June 6 and June 27.

EARLY last Sunday morning there was a high speed collision between two cars at the corner of Ocean Street and Trelawney Street, Woollahra – one person was killed instantly, another is not expected to live.

The next evening, on Monday, there was another spectacular crash involving a taxi and a private car on the same corner.

Luckily there did not appear to be any injuries, although both vehicles were extensively damaged.

Tow truck operators, with an eye for business, keep vigil under the trees on the western side of Trelawney Street so that they can be on hand when collisions occur.

I don't know the statistics of how many accidents have occurred on this corner, how many people have been killed or injured, how many vehicles damaged, or how much anguish these accidents have caused.

Your Department no doubt has records that will give you this information and I wonder why the DMR has chosen to do nothing about it for so long.

The Ocean Street pedestrian crossing at Trelawney Street is more of a hazard than a help. From my observation, vehicles routinely refuse to slow down as they approach the Trelawney Street corner along Ocean Street, so that pedestrians have to judge whether to brazen it out, or to leap for their lives in the event that the motorist doesn't slow down in time.

The actions of the residents of the nearby retirement home have to be seen to be believed. It is so bad that I have declared this crossing off limits to my two small school-aged children, insisting instead that they cross at the Forth Street lights.

All these comments about the dangers of this intersection are not new to you. When I lived in Queen Street, Woollahra, I saw plenty of references to this subject in the *Wentworth Courier* and in *Village Voice*, the journal of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association, as well as hearing it referred to in neighbourhood conversation.

Your experts must realise that the invitation of the long Ocean Street straightaway, combined with poor peripheral warning of cross streets, is a recipe for disaster.

Something happens to people when they drive along Ocean Street.

LETTERS FORUM

The overhanging trees make it seem like they're sliding through a tunnel and they appear to be given a false sense of security. So the need for some action is now, not later.

I understand that traffic lights are to be placed at the intersection some time this year. But will you please exercise your influence in having them placed this month – rather than this year.

Along with others, I believe that this street is totally inadequate to fill the role of a major traffic distributor.

Traffic lights or a roundabout would be a nice start, but until the Main Roads Department really tackles the job of diverting the dense traffic from Ocean Street, the problem really will not be resolved.

* * *

AS A postscript to the above letter, there were a further two accidents at the Ocean Street pedestrian crossing at the corner of Trelawney that were observed by a friend and myself.

One, on June 4, was caused by one motorist stopping while another motorist failed to stop. Another, on June 6, happened when a man was knocked over by a car at the crossing.

When are you going to do something about this Mr Chaseling?

I suggest that a radar check of cars travelling along Ocean Street would reveal a significant number grossly exceeding the speed limit.

Combine this with the poor visibility of that crossing and the fact that the overhead crossing light was out when I last observed it and the position becomes even more exaggerated.

REG FOUNTAIN
80 Ocean Street

Arboreal "butchery"

TWO weeks ago, the camphor laurel trees which gracefully framed a home in Ocean Street, Woollahra, were butchered by men carrying electric saws.

Now we are faced with mutilated half sawn down trees with bare stumps raised to the sky. Also, the tacked-on entrance to the upstairs of the building which was concealed by these trees, is now visible and quite unsightly.

It is a pity to see that not all the residents in this area share association's ideals in maintaining, and not blighting what is left of this beautiful part of Sydney.

TREE LOVER
Ocean Street

Need for re-thinking at the intersection

A LOT has been written and said recently about the failure of the DMR to keep to the Minister's promise of shortening the green light time which is at present favouring the Ocean Street route from Oxford Street. Still nothing has been done.

The excuse seems to be that a shortening of green light time on the right turning lane would throw the whole computerised system at this intersection into confusion.

It is obvious to anyone who both drives and uses this intersection as a pedestrian that the only thing the traffic signal system does efficiently is feed large amounts of traffic down Ocean Street.

Vehicles travelling to the city via the expressway and Oxford Street route are often stopped at the end of the expressway to allow York Road traffic to cross into the Ocean Street turning lane.

Then they have to stop again if a pedestrian wishes to cross from Woollahra to Centennial Park.

The lights at this intersection and the way the intersection itself functions desperately need rethinking.

Oxford Street is the route which should be given every incentive to motorists, with proper signposting indicating both the Oxford Street and Moore Park Road routes into the city.

No thought has been given to pedestrians. There are many residents of Woollahra who do not use Centennial Park now because crossing is dangerous.

The lane closest to the Centennial Park gates is positively lethal. Motorists for various reasons just do not see, or ignore, the lights.

In the 20 times I have crossed this section in the past week, five vehicles have driven straight through the red light – and many schoolchildren use this crossing every day.

The obvious solution would be an over or under pass for pedestrians. As usual I suppose it will take several fatalities before the DMR even looks at this problem.

In short, the design and function of this intersection needs serious rethinking, both for vehicles and pedestrians.

KATE HILTON
2a Ocean Street

WEST WOOLLAHRA PROFILE

HAVING driven past this quite majestic building with its large fig trees at least a million times ... having corrected my daughter's pronunciation (GERTE!) ... and having shelved awkward questions as to what it was - the time had come to stop being ignorant and check it out.

Its full title is dauntingly Goethe Institute for Promoting the Study of the German Language Abroad and for International Cultural Cooperation.

And all that with a full time staff of eight!

There are two other Goethe Institutes in Australia - one in Melbourne and one in Canberra.

They are funded by the German Foreign Office and there is general agreement that they should not be the cultural mouthpiece of the German Government that happens to be in power.

Instead they should reflect an overall view of the cultural life in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Activities at the Institute include

- Teaching the German language. Part time teachers conduct classes at the Institute and all are native speakers.

- Cooperation in the training and advanced instruction of foreign (ie Australian) teachers of German.

- Seminars, symposia and lectures by scholars, scientists and publicists.

- Readings and workshops involving artists and writers.

- Theatre tours, guest productions and theatre festivals.

- Chamber music tours and festivals.

- Instructional courses and seminars in music.

- Tours by jazz and pop groups.

- Cultural information supplied through films, videos, slides, photographs, books, texts, newspapers,



What goes on at the Goethe

How much do you really know about your neighbourhood? With this issue, we are starting a series of profiles about our local institutions and people. The first, by PIXIE NOLAN, discusses the work of the Goethe Institute in Ocean Street.

tapes and discs.

- Film performances, film weeks and film festivals.

- Seminars and workshops on film, television and radio. Where possible with directors, creative artists and critics.

The Institute also awards scholarships for the study of German and for the training and advanced instruction of foreign teachers of German.

All in all, one could end up feeling it is very highbrow and intense - NOT SO!

At the Institute they want to encourage us all to go and see what's happening.

I discovered that if you show an interest by either popping in or telephoning, the charming staff - who

all speak English - will tell you what's currently on.

You can get advance notice of things such as exhibitions by asking to be put on their mailing list.

In fact on **Sunday, August 18th**, the Goethe Institute is having an open day from 11 am to 5 pm.

You will have the opportunity to wander through the Institute at your leisure, to meet the friendly staff, to browse through the library and to ask as many questions in either English, German, Hungarian (!) or French (!) as they are able to answer.

There will be a music performance at 2.30 pm in the lecture room by the Collage's Ensemble, and you can view samples from the video and film collection.

See you there!

READ'S

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A TALKING point at our Cheese and Wine Party at Fred Pazotti's last month was the delightful Australian tea-trees, trimmed in the style of European standards, lent by Duane Norris of Queens Court. We also had a magnificent floral display provided by The Woollahra Florist.

The function proved a great social success, giving local residents an opportunity to relax with old friends and meet some newcomers to the area.

These included Jurd Schmid of the Swiss National Tourist Office; Pat and Chris Wetherall, recently arrived from Denmark; Mr and Mrs Goodall of Ocean Street; and Bernard and Margaret Coles of Moncur Street.

Leo Schofield arrived fresh from a tour of foreign parts. As usual, Leo has some grand plans for the future of our area. Lucky for us they usually come to fruition.

* * *

A HEARTFELT welcome to Queen Street is extended to the Francis Haymes Rare Bookshop in the three-storey building towards the Oxford Street end of Queen Street which was once, believe it or not, an hotel.

* * *

IN ADDITION to the mourned departure of Bonassi's corner shop in Wallis Street, noted elsewhere in *Village Voice*, we were saddened by the closing of Jules Opi's splendid Victorian style pharmacy in Ocean Street.

Established in 1888 as Olson's Ocean Street Pharmacy, it was one of the oldest in Sydney. Jules not only preserved but enhanced the character of the shop with its flamboyantly lettered drawer system and original cedar and marble fittings.

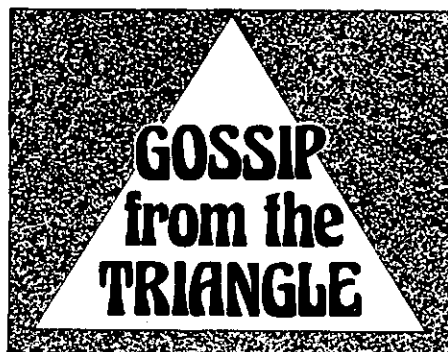
Now Jules has moved into the city to run a travel agency and the pharmacy is being turned into a takeaway food bar. But at least one link will remain with the past - the unusual arched awning over the pavement.

* * *

OUR TRIANGLE has always been a popular area for consulates. Currently we have no less than nine, ranging from the massive and brutally designed Soviet Consulate in Fullerton Street to the tiny Egyptian Consulate in Ocean Street.

Now it looks as though we shall have another. The Indonesians want to set up in the large house on the corner of Wallis Street and Ocean Street, next to Ronald Coleman Lodge.

Woollahra Council is not opposing



Compiled by Monica McDonald and Robin Brampton

the project, subject to adequate parking in the grounds.

* * *

HE MAY not have been the most distinguished resident of West Woollahra, but he was certainly one of the best known.

So we note with regret the passing of non-member George whose universal soubriquet was derived from his extravagant drinking habits.

A few years ago, George was featured in *Shadow People*, a book of superb text and photographs capturing the Sydney folk alienated by our highly ordered society which gives its highest priority to economic values.

George's address was a humpy in Trumper Park. Either befriended or taunted by schoolchildren, he was the scourge of local shopkeepers to whom his attitude was, shall we say, less than polite.

But he was a spirited man ... a character ... and he will be missed.

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

A residents' action association covering the area bounded by Jersey Road, Edgecliff Road and Oxford Street, West Woollahra, N.S.W. Affiliated to the National Trust.

Address: Box 16, P.O. Woollahra, N.S.W. 2025.

Subscription: Individual \$5 a year; Family \$8; Corporate \$10; Life \$50.

Patron: Dame Joan Sutherland.

President: Robin Brampton.

Vice-President: Margaret Lewis.

Treasurer: Mollie Lenthall.

Secretary: Monica McDonald.

Committee: Ronald Gouder, Neville Kitto, John Morton, Pixie Nolan, David Ross and Tom Wilhelm.

Honorary Committee Member: Leo Schofield.

Convenor of the Ocean Street Traffic Committee: Neville Kitto.

Village Voice is published approximately every six months. Letters and other contributions on local topics are invited. The editor is Robin Brampton (331 1188 day, 326 1257 evening and weekends).

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Please Join Us!

The Association needs all the help it can get in its fight for the best interests of the local community. If you are reading this and you are not a member, please join us. For individuals, the cost is only \$5 a year.

Family membership costs \$8 (two people); corporate membership is \$10; and life membership \$50. Send your application to the secretary at the above address. Many thanks.

West Woollahra Diary

GOETHE INSTITUTE

Open Day, Sunday, August 18, 11 am to 5 pm. Music performance in the lecture room at 2.30 pm.

SENIOR CITIZENS CENTRE, Gaden Reserve

Annual Thank You Party for voluntary helpers, by invitation, Saturday, August 24.

Annual Fathers Day Entertainment, Monday, September 2, afternoon.

PADDINGTON GARDEN CLUB

Garden Walk, Saturday, September 7, 12-4 pm, commencing at St Georges Hall, Five Ways, where tickets will be available on the day. A charge of \$3 covers map and afternoon tea. Proceeds for the restoration of Juniper Hall.

PADDINGTON SOCIETY

Paddington Party - 21 Today to celebrate the 21st birthday of the Paddington Society, Friday, October 11. More details to be announced later. The Secretary of the Paddington Society is John Hill, PO Box 99, Paddington, NSW 2021. Ph 33 5395.